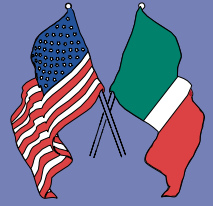




NEW JERSEY ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION



Governor McGreevey and Larry Paragano - Chairman of the NJ Italian American Heritage Commission - share the podium at the Columbus Day ceremonies 2002 at Drumthwacket.

The Commission is pleased to provide this brief publication as a means to familiarize the public with the Commission and its work.

In January 2002, Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco signed into public law Title 18A Chapter 4, Article 4 - 1-5 - C.18A: 4-46 the act that created the Commission. The act, created with bipartisan support of the NJ legislature, held its first organizational meeting in May of 2002 and has enjoyed the support of the current administration of Governor James McGreevey.

The Commission, in but not of the New Jersey Department of Education, consists of twenty-one members appointed to staggered terms by the governor, the senate and assembly respectively.

A core goal of the Commission is stated in article G. of the law: "It is appropriate and desirable that programs, workshops, institutes, seminars and other teacher-training activities for the

study of the culture, history and heritage of Italians and Americans of Italian heritage be conducted at the various high schools and institutions of higher education in this State."

Beyond this other objectives are described including but not limited to: general public awareness and education programs, the promotion of the study of the Italian language, the creation of opportunities for international cultural exchange, research and trade communications, and supporting centers of excellence at New Jersey's institutions of higher education.

Based on an underlying and guiding philosophy, the Commission underscores the contributions to American life, values and democratic institutions of all immigrant groups, typified by the Italian American experience in New Jersey, a principle that needs to be constantly understood and appreciated by the general public.

Through education with an emphasis on youth, the Commission effects its programs through the New Jersey Italian- Italian American Heritage Institute located at Rutgers the State University.

Committees of the Commission

All Commissioners agree to serve on one or more working committees

- **School Curriculum and Education Committee.**
Chair, Dr. Gilda Rorro Baldassari
- **Community Relations Outreach Committee.**
Chair, Richard Bilotti
- **Governmental Relations Committee.**
Chair, Angelo Moressi Esq.
- **Institute Academic Advisory Board to the Chair.**
Dr. William Connell

- **Higher Education Committee.**
Chair, Dr. Marissa Trubiano
- **International and Public Awareness Committee.**
Co- Chair, Ronald D'Argenio, N. Larry Paragano
- **Development and Funding Committee.**
Chair, Peter Coccoziello
- **Sensitivity – Awareness Committee.**
Chair, Tina Segali



A troop of renaissance attired jesters from the city of Piansano, Province of Viterbo, Italy entertains a crowd of over 300 guests at the Governor's Mansion celebration of Columbus Day 2002

Current Program Activity

The Commission committee members working with the Institute staff have begun work on initiatives.

A K-12 Curriculum Committee has been formed, in conjunction with the New Jersey Department of Education, to oversee the development of The Curriculum Guide for use in public and private schools throughout the state. The target date for the first phase and the selection of pilot school districts will be the 2003- 2004 school year.

Invitations to nearly two hundred Italian American Civic and Social Organizations throughout New Jersey will be sent to attend a convocation and information sharing event in late winter or early spring of 2003.

A web site for the Commission is being developed and along with other publications, newsletters, books and research that are being considered will become available to the public.

Plans for an international cultural and commerce information exchange mission to Italy are under consideration.

The Commission invites the on going support and participation of all of New Jersey's Italian Americans and all who acknowledge that we are a nation of immigrants. The Commission and its supporters value the fundamental concept of "E Pluribus Unum" with justice and opportunity for all to keep America strong and free.

COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF

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- *Eileen Poiani, Ph.D. Advisor*
- *Michael Gianmmarino, Advisor*
- *Dean Barcelona, Advisor*

SUPPORT GROUPS

New Jersey Italian American Heritage Foundation.